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The Rockefeller Foundation and Refugee Scholars during the Early Years of the Cold War

Reiko Maekawa

Introduction

The main objective of my present study is to take a look at the postwar era, during which the Rockefeller Foundation (RF) supported various projects of former refugee scholars through its grant-giving activities. The efforts of the RF to aid promising scholars fleeing the spread of fascism in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s have been well documented by scholars, especially by those who have made use of the materials at the Rockefeller Archive Center, Sleepy Hollow, New York, USA. Less explored is how the RF played an important role in not only rebuilding intellectual ties across the Atlantic after the Second World War, but also in assisting the intricate process of the transmission and hybridization of ideas by serving as a catalyst between refugee scholars and American intellectuals. The fact that this process took place amid the politically volatile milieu of the Cold War and McCarthyism adds yet another layer to the story, namely cultural politics intertwined with the development of new ideas and disciplines. With this objective in mind, I will focus on two RF-assisted projects/programs of the 1950s in the human-

ities, namely the RF's support of the international conferences sponsored by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, and the Program in Legal and Political Philosophy designed and implemented by the RF.

The participants in the international conferences sponsored by the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) between 1950 and 1955 at Berlin, Paris, Hamburg, Rome, and Milan included refugee intellectuals such as Franz Neumann, Michael Polanyi, Hannah Arendt and Nicola Chiaromonte, as well as such New York intellectuals like Mary McCarthy, Dwight Macdonald and Sidney Hook. Nicholas Nabokov, Vladimir Nabokov's cousin and an émigré composer and conductor from Russia, was secretary-general of the CCF and turned to the RF for financial support. The controversial CCF programs, cooperative ventures of refugee scholars and American intellectuals, can be seen as a product of the Cold War cultural politics as well as an attempt to revitalize cultural and intellectual ties across the Atlantic and across the Pacific.

Another interesting RF-supported project of the 1950s, the Program in Legal and Political Philosophy (LAPP), also involved both former refugee scholars and American intellectuals. It took place at a cross-section of various disciplines such as legal studies, political science, philosophy and international relations. The list of representative books and articles by grantees under this program, compiled by Kenneth W. Thompson in November 1960,¹ is impressive. Included are Hannah

This is a revised version of a research report that appeared on the web site of the Rockefeller Archive Center (www.rockarch.org) under the title of "The Rockefeller Foundation and the Intellectual Life of Refugee Scholars during the Cold War." I would like to express my thanks to the archivists of the Rockefeller Archive Center who helped me with my research. Especially my sincere gratitude goes to Dr. Darwin Stapleton, former director of the Rockefeller Archive Center and the late Dr. Ken Rose who supported my research along the way.

Arendt's *The Human Condition* (1958), Herbert Marcuse's *Reason and Revolution* (1941) and Leo Strauss's *What Is Political Philosophy?* (1959), Eric Voegelin's *Order and History* (1956 and 1957), Hans J. Morgenthau's *The Purpose of American Politics* (1960), and two articles published in 1959: Hans Jonas's "Practical Uses of Theory" in *Social Research*, and Otto Kierchheimer's "The Administration of Justice and the Concept of Legality in East Germany" in *The Yale Law Journal*. These contributions by established or younger refugee scholars are only part of the list, which also includes books and articles by John Rawls, Karl R. Popper, George F. Kennan, Reinhold Niebuhr, Allan Bloom, and Henry Kissinger. Not only the high caliber of this scholarship but its interdisciplinary nature and the wide spectrum of ideological stances represented by these writers, which points to 1960s radicalism as well as neo-conservatism of the 1970s, is indicative of the program's broad and eclectic character.

In the discussion which follows, I will examine the genesis and development of these RF- supported projects and their implications, academic as well as political. Before discussing these specific projects, a brief look at the RF's change in policy toward refugee intellectuals amid an increasing concern with national security will serve as a good starting point.

1) The Cold War and the RF's postwar policy toward refugee scholars

Although political instabilities in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary

1 "Books Published under Social Science Program Grant in Legal and Political Philosophy," with a forward by Kenneth W. Thompson, November, 1960, folder 83, box 9, series 910, Record Group [hereafter RG] 3, Rockefeller Foundation Archives [hereafter RFA], Rockefeller Archive Center [hereafter RAC], Sleepy Hollow, New York, USA.

brought a new wave of refugee intellectuals to American shores in the postwar era, the Rockefeller Foundation did not launch another major “refugee scholar program” comparable to its wartime program. In his 1946 report Thomas B. Appleget, vice president of the RF from 1927 to 1949, reviewed the RF’s successful humanitarian efforts to save displaced European scholars, many of whom “have taken root in this country and are flourishing in the new soil.” However, he clearly stated that the RF’s program for refugee scholars “began in 1933 and ended in 1945.”² In an officers’ conference held in 1948, Joseph H. Willits, Director of the Social Science Division, recommended that the RF “refrain from any revival of [the] refugee scholar program, with one exception, i.e., East Asian and Slavic Studies, in which areas it is difficult to find mature scholars familiar with language and culture.”³

Furthermore, RF officers’ April 6–7, 1948 discussion of RF programs in Europe emphasized “the importance of avoiding projects that might conceivably be used to injure the United States and countries friendly to it.”⁴ Yet, the RF’s growing defensive stance on the issue of national security was at this point still tempered by its universalistic concern, as Raymond Fosdick, RF president from 1936 to 1948, wrote to Warren Weaver, Director of the Division of Natural Sciences and Agriculture: “I am anxious to maintain as far as possible the principle on which

2 Thomas B. Appleget, “The Foundation’s Experience with Refugee Scholars,” March 5, 1946, folder 545a, box 47, series 200, RG 1.1, RFA, RAC. See also Susan Irving and Kristin Bollas, “Lives in the Balance: The Refugee Scholar Experience,” *Rockefeller Archive Center Newsletter* (2008): 9–11.

3 Willits’ comment in officer’s conference, March 18, 1948, folder 199, box 25, series 900, RG3, RFA, RAC.

4 “Policy re Program in Europe,” April 6–7, 1948, folder 199, box 25, series 900, RG3, RFA, RAC.

the Foundation has always acted — i.e., that our assistance is given without regard for race, creed, color, or political opinion.”⁵

By the early 1950s, the RF’s stance toward national security was firmer and less ambivalent, as RF vice president Lindsley F. Kimball indicates in his report:

The people of the US are facing a new situation under the sun. . . . Now our enemy is insidious. He is international. The RF can’t live in isolation from the enigma of the times. The Senate and FBI investigation of the Institute of Pacific Relations [an RF grant recipient] and the charges proffered by Representative Cox indicate the belief in at least a few minds, that the RF is either unwittingly giving support to the enemies of our country or is itself fuzzy-minded, unrealistic, and even pinkishly inclined.⁶

In his extended exploration of the subject as to whether the RF should support possibly Communist-inclined fellows and grantees, Kimball mentions the name of Hanns Eisler, a German émigré composer who was awarded a RF fellowship in music in 1940. “Knowing what we now know,” Kimball tells us, “we would not today award this fellowship.” Reminding the readers of the drastically altered situation between then and now, he further pressed his point:

At the time it was done, musical competency and creative ability were the only criteria, and it is probable that as of that date the fellowship would still have been awarded even though the communist background were known. It was not then significant. Today it is.⁷

5 Fosdick to Warren, May 12, 1948, folder 199, box 25, series 900, RG3, RFA, RAC.

6 Lindsley F. Kimball, “The Rockefeller Foundation vis a vis National Security,” November 19, 1951, folder 201, box 25, series 900, RG3, RFA, RAC.

7 Ibid. On Eisler and the Rockefeller Foundation, see Johannes C. Gall, “An ‘art of figure’ of Film Scoring: Hanns Eisler’s Rockefeller Foundation-Funded Film Music Project (1940–1942) in *Patronizing the Public: American Philanthropy’s Transformation*

Kimball's report is an interesting document, in that it preaches "a moral responsibility to stand between the extremes," of living "within the limits of public tolerance" and avoiding "the breakdown of public confidence." "To enter any controversial area is risky," he cautioned, before boldly and contradictorily proclaiming that "we are prepared to accept risk rather than restrict our activities to wholly safe areas."⁸

Throughout the early 1950s, the question of whether the RF should make grants to support "a scientist who was once denied a visa" or to a "socialist" or to support the "un-American" or "subversive" ideas of those behind "the iron curtain" became a constant subject of the RF's internal correspondence.⁹ Dean Rusk, former Assistant Secretary of State who succeeded Chester I. Barnard as president of the RF in 1952, stated the RF's position more bluntly in his letter to Dr. Robert B. Watson of Harvard: "We are not prepared to take a risk that the communist may also be a good scientist or scholar whose work, if shared, would be of general benefit to science or scholarship."¹⁰ At the same time, not all RF officers shared Rusk's unambiguous anti-communist stance.

In a memorandum to Rusk, Willits pondered the advisability of the foundation becoming too cautious and conservative in its grant-giving activities. Using a biological metaphor, he presented a unique notion of how the RF could contribute to the production of new ideas by encouraging the process of cross fertilization:

of Culture, Communication, and the Humanities, ed. William J. Buxton (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009), 123–151.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ G.R. Pomerat, memorandum, December 30, 1952 and Herbert A. Deane to Willits, December 1, 1952, folder 201, box 25, series 900, RG3, RFA, RAC.

¹⁰ Dean Rusk to Dr. Robert B. Watson, March 1, 1954, folder 201, box 25, series 900, RF3, RFA, RAC.

Biologists have long sought for and welcomed “mutants,” on the ground that some of those variants may contain the genes which will point the desirable evolution of the future. It is of prime importance, especially in the social and humanistic fields, that the policies of the RF should not be such as to discourage interest in and encouragement of intellectual mutants in the social field.¹¹

If Willits’ argument was based on the progressive outlook and evolutionary scientism which seem to have dominated the minds of many RF officers, his pronouncement also may be interpreted in the context of Cold War rhetoric: the dichotomy between the totalitarian suppression of ideas and the open exchange of ideas in “free” countries. Thus he writes:

By preventing adventuring, and insisting on an official line, totalitarian societies shut themselves off from a rich crop of new ideas and one of the basic sources of growth. In combating communism, it is important that the Western World — and the RF as one of its best intellectual symbols — should not encourage the impoverishment of the stream of new ideas.¹²

Interestingly, Willits tried to emphasize that he was fighting communism by being open to new ideas. Amid the politically charged climate of the 1950s, scientific-sounding biological metaphors such as “mutant,” “variant,” “crop,” and “growth” had to be seasoned with the right amount of anti-communism in order to be acceptable to a more politically-minded man like Dean Rusk.

The challenge for Willits and other RF officers was whether and how they could help individual scholars grow and develop amid both a relatively hostile atmosphere to intellectuals as well as mounting anxieties on the part of its presi-

11 Willits to Rusk, January 27, 1953, folder 201, box 25, series 900, RG3, RFA, RAC.

12 Ibid.

dent and trustees. Until April 15, 1957, the RF staff routinely checked the official indices of government investigations to determine whether individuals involved in prospective RF grants and appointments were suspected of being communists.¹³ In the case of Polish recipients of fellowships under the Science Program, they were put under surveillance during their stay in the U.S. The RF constantly sought the advice of State Department officials about the proper procedures to follow.¹⁴

In this general atmosphere of caution and guardedness, the experiment of transplanting the foreign-born ideas of refugee scholars into American soil was conducted in a piece-meal fashion. Willits' and other officers' interest in creating intellectual mutants — better intellectual crops born out of cross-fertilization — was intermingled with their Cold War agenda of discovering and nurturing talents serviceable to the national interest of the U.S. or the survival of the "western world." What follows are a few examples of their mixed legacy under the shadow of the Cold War.

2) RF and the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF)

As mentioned before, the participants in the five conferences sponsored by the Congress for Cultural Freedom between 1950 and 1955 at Berlin, Paris, Hamburg, Rome, and Milan included refugee intellectuals. Among them, for example, there was a politically highly charged one such as Michael Polanyi, a Hungarian physical chemist who earned his reputation at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute and after Hitler's rise moved to the University of Manchester as a profes-

13 Flora M. Rhind to all officers and secretaries, April 15, 1957, folder 201, box 25, series 900, RG3, RFA, RAC.

14 For details of Poland Science Program, see "Poland Science Program," folder 17–19, series 789, RG1.2, RFA, RAC.

sor of sociology. Amid the Cold War, he served as the chairman of the committee of science and freedom within the CCF.¹⁵ This committee's main goal was to fight against the suppression of academic freedom in communist regimes and it had little to do with science itself, but the task of dealing with Polanyi and his committee fell to the RF's Natural Sciences and Agriculture Division and its director, Warren Weaver.

In 1953 the RF made a grant of \$10,000 to the CCF for the expenses of an international conference on "Science and Freedom" held in Hamburg in the summer of 1953.¹⁶ In his diary, Warren Weaver described Nicholas Nabokov as "a Russian who has recently become an American citizen" and quoted him saying that there is "the problem of trying to convince the people in Europe, and particularly the intellectuals, that McCarthy does not in fact represent a large and important segment of American society." According to Nabokov and another luncheon guest from the CCF, "what they want to talk about [in the conference] are the constructive activities in which they can all join to combat communism."¹⁷ After

15 On Nabokov and his involvement in the CCF, see Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York, New Press, 1999); Volker R. Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2001). For biographical material on refugee scholars, I mainly consulted: Laura Fermi, *Illustrious Immigration: The Intellectual Migration from Europe 1930–41* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968); Claus-Dieter Krohn, *Intellectuals in Exile: Refugee Scholars and the New School for Social Research*, trans. Rita and Robert Kimber (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993); Lewis A. Coser, *Refugee Scholars in America: Their Impact and Their Experiences* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).

16 Grant action statement, folder 179: Congress for Cultural Freedom, Science and Freedom Conference, 1953–1955, box 25, series 100D, RG1.2, RFA, RAC.

17 Weaver's interview notes in his diary, February 25, 1954, folder 179, box 25, series 100D, RG 1.2. RFA, RAC.

the Hamburg conference, the CCF again asked for the RF's assistance in publishing a pamphlet that "would show that dialectical materialism is not the method through which science progresses nor is communism a scientific solution to social problems, as Soviet propaganda pretends."¹⁸

The CCF recommended Sidney Hook to write such a pamphlet. Hook, a professor of philosophy at New York University, began his academic career as a Marxist in the late 1920s and became a fanatical anticommunist by the 1950s. When Weaver received this recommendation, he sought the advice of Bertrand Russell. The distinguished British mathematician and philosopher expressed his misgivings about Hook by saying that he "has seemed to be somehow infected by the witch-hunting spirit which is now very prevalent." He also questioned the nature of the "Freedom" that the CCF was promoting, noting that "I have recently resigned from the Congress for Cultural Freedom because I thought its pursuit of freedom not sufficiently comprehensive."¹⁹

Hook, for his part, told Chadbourne Gilpatric, a RF officer, that he "has been increasingly disturbed by the naiveté and gullibility of European scientists" who are "drawn to dialectical materialism and communism." Gilpatric was worried that the proposed pamphlet "might appear propagandistic if funds for its publication were to come from the RF." He cautioned Hook that "the final answer of officers and trustees might be in the negative."²⁰

In the fall the routine security check of the members of the CCF was under-

18 Buzzati-Traverso to Weaver, June 16, 1954, folder 179, box 25, series 100D, RG1.2, RFA, RAC.

19 Bertrand Russell to Weaver, June 12, 1954, folder 179, box 25, series 100D, RG1.2, RFA, RAC.

20 Gilpatric interview notes with Sidney Hook, September 15, 1954, folder 179, box 25, series 100D, RG1.2, RFA, RAC.

taken and Weaver noted “confusing aspects of two organizations,”²¹ namely the American Congress [Committee] for Cultural Freedom and the international organization. Dean Rusk wrote to the Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, to ask “whether the Department of State considered that such modest support [of the CCF] by us was in the public interest.”²² A subsequent internal memorandum reported that “on the basis of a letter which Mr. Rusk has received from the Department of State, the officers are now prepared to release to the Congress for Cultural Freedom the entire sum of \$12,000 toward support of the program of its science and freedom.”²³

The next day Nabokov was informed of the grant of \$12,000, from which “\$6000 would be used to finance the preparation and publication in three languages of the brochure on dialectical materialism.”²⁴ Such an instant communication was possible only because of the RF’s special relationship with the State Department: former RF trustee John Foster Dulles was appointed Secretary of State in January 1953. Rusk, the RF’s president from 1952 to 1961, later became the Secretary of State in the Kennedy Administration.

In 1956, the RF made another small grant to the CCF’s committee on science and freedom toward the travel expenses of three delegates invited to participate in a Study Group on Academic Freedom to be held in Europe during the summer of

21 Weaver, excerpt from diary, September 23, 1954, folder 179, box 25, series 100D, RG1.2. RFA, RAC.

22 Rusk to Secretary of State, January 21, 1955, folder 179, box 25, series 100D, RG1.2. RFA, RAC.

23 Internal memorandum: re: Support of the program of its science and freedom committee, February 9, 1955, folder 179, box 25, 100D, RG1.2, RFA, RAC.

24 Flora Rhind to Nabokov, February 10, 1955, folder 179, box 25, 100D, RG1.2, RFA, RAC.

1956. The delegates included Sidney Hook along with a Chilean scholar and an Australian scholar.²⁵ By the spring of 1957, however, RF officers started to have increasing doubts about further supporting the CCF's science and freedom committee's activities, which included sending a protest statement to the governments of the USSR and Hungary and trying to hold a "conference of Polish economists at Manchester."²⁶

In internal RF correspondence, one officer identified only as "RSM" showed his skepticism about the efficacy of "two men (Michael Polanyi and his son George Polanyi) setting forth to defend the universities of the world against all the enemies of academic freedom." He thus concluded somewhat ironically that "it seems more than doubtful that their rights can be successfully defended by a small group of self-appointed and foundation-endowed champions."²⁷ Another officer wrote to Weaver that "this type of business looks more and more political to me and I feel that the RF should withdraw from any further support."²⁸

Interestingly, the RF's support of the CCF was imbued with ambiguities; they found its promotion of transatlantic intellectual ties and "freedom" against communism appealing, but they were worried about the seemingly dubious political position of some of the CCF members who were suspect from both sides. On the one hand, those members were mostly former leftist and/or refugee intellectuals

25 Grant action statement, folder 40: Congress for Cultural Freedom, Science and Freedom, Visits, 1956–7, box 6, series 100, RG1.2, RFA, RAC.

26 Polanyi's interest in holding a conference for Polish scientists in Manchester was recorded in Norman S. Buchanan's diary: excerpt from Buchanan diary, January 2, 1957, folder 180, box 25, series 100D, RFA, RAC.

27 RSM to JGH, JCB, WW, May 16, 1957, folder 180, box 25, series 100D, RG1.2, RFA, RAC. The 1957 annual report of the RF indicates that "RSM" is Robert S. Morison, director of Biological and Medical Research at the RF.

28 JCB to Weaver, May 22, 1957, folder 180, box 25, series 100D, RG1.2, RFA, RAC.

who were seen as “un-American” and untrustworthy by Joseph McCarthy and his supporters. On the other hand, people like Sidney Hook were often seen as “most notorious renegades from the radical causes”²⁹ by liberals and independent radicals who were critical of doctrinaire anti-communism. Moreover, the RF’s support of Michael Polanyi’s defense of “academic freedom” against communist regimes had an ironical implication as the academic freedom on the American university campuses was threatened by McCarthyism and his national, as well as local, supporters in the early 1950s. Yet, in spite of some officers’ misgivings about the RF support of the CCF, Dean Rusk, in consultation with the State Department, approved the RF’s support of the CCF, presumably as a small investment in the interest of the “free” world which was waging a battle against communism on a cultural front.³⁰

Clearly Nabokov and Polanyi, on their part, made use of the RF, whose name was held in high esteem in Europe for its extensive support of universities and scholars before, during and after the war. As Polanyi wrote to Weaver, “The assistance of the RF in this matter has a symbolic significance which adds to our prestige and encourages our work.”³¹ Independent of the RF’s intentions, they tried to pursue their own agenda as crusaders for academic freedom and /or freedom of artistic expression. When Dean Rusk asked one of the RF’s officers about his impression of the Hamburg conference, he heard a positive view that it

29 Steven Best, “Sidney Hook,” in *Encyclopedia of the American Left*, ed. Mari Jo Buhle, Paul Buhle, and Dan Georgakas (1990; rpt. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 332. For Hook and his political odyssey, see, for example, Alexander Bloom, *Prodigal Sons: The New York Intellectuals and Their World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

30 For details of the CCF’s alleged links with the CIA, see Berghahn, 241–249.

31 Polanyi to Weaver, April 25, 1956, folder 40, box 6, series 100, RG1.2, RFA, RAC.

had “created a new discipline or field of work; a new field of concern seems to be emerging out of this common interest.”³²

As we have seen earlier with Willits’ interest in intellectual mutants and the growth of new intellectual crops resulting from the RF’s support of heterogeneous ideas, RF officers and even trustees might truly have been interested in the development of new ideas while at the same time they maintained their cold-warrior position. Apparently, within the RF these two concerns went hand in hand without any sense of contradiction or inconsistency, highlighting the subtlety of their balancing act in a politically volatile situation.

The RF’s support of the CCF also came from a seemingly less political concern for the promotion of arts. In 1954, the Humanities Division supported an international conference of composers, critics and performing artists with a \$10,000 grant to the CCF. After the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, Nabokov, “concerned about the plight and prospects of able Hungarian musicians and performing artists then in Austria,”³³ turned to the RF for help. In 1957 the RF made a grant of \$70,000 to the CCF toward the support of Hungarian musicians and performing artists under a Program of Emergency Aid in the Arts and Sciences for Hungarian Refugees.

Toward the end of the 1950s, Nabokov persuaded the RF’s Humanities Division to support a musical conference to be held in Tokyo in 1961. Entitled “the East-West Music Encounter,” the conference had the ironic consequence of becoming a symbol of the East-West political rivalry when China and Russia did not participate. Nabokov told Charles Burton Fahs, Director of the Humanities Division, that “the

32 Excerpt from John Marshall’s diary, March 2, 1954, folder 40, box 6, series 100, RG1.2, RFA, RAC.

33 Grant action statement, folder 37: Congress for Cultural Freedom, Hungarian Performing Artists, January–May 1957, box 5, series 100, RG1.2, RFA, RAC.

left-wing group in Japan began attacking the meeting as a cold war undertaking.”³⁴ On May 8, 1961, *Newsweek* reported that “Tokyo’s first East-West Music Encounter had developed just the sort of political overtones that the festival had tried to avoid” as “Leftist critics and composers in Japan boycotted Encounter.”³⁵

Clearly, on the Cold War cultural front, the 1950s became a hot season of international exchanges crossing national and cultural borders, designed and implemented by émigré intellectuals like Nabokov and Polanyi with international philanthropic organizations such as the RF and the Ford Foundation supporting their experiments with a mixture of anxiety and expectation.

3) The Program in Legal & Political Philosophy (LAPP)

The Program in Legal and Political Program began in 1952 and concluded in 1962, with the RF having “appropriated approximately \$833,000 in support of research by individual scholars in the fields of legal and political philosophy.”³⁶ The July 8, 1955 RF report which reviewed this program stated its history thus: “The LAPP Program seems to have had its genesis in fairly vague comments among certain of the trustees to the effect that it might be well for the Foundation to see if something could be done in the field of morals and ethics. The difficult task of defining specific goals and discovering suitable methods of operation for the attain-

34 Fahs interview notes with Nabokov, April 26, 1961, folder 399, box 52, series 100, RG1.2, RFA, RAC.

35 May 8, 1961 article in *Newsweek*, related newspaper clippings included in folder 399, box 52, series 100, RG1.2, RFA, RAC.

36 See “previous interest” included in grant action for research in legal and political philosophy and international relations, December 6–7, 1960, folder 73, box 8, series 910, RG3, RFA, RAC.

ment of this very general end was taken up within the Foundation particularly by Joseph H. Willits.³⁷ This review also mentions that Herbert A. Deane of Columbia University was appointed as Consultant to the Foundation in LAPP by Willits. Deane served in this capacity from September 1, 1952 to September 15, 1953.

The program and policy files, which date back to 1934, give us some insight into how “morals and ethics had been trimmed down to legal and political philosophy”³⁸ and how its orientation became more experimental and open to new ideas along the way. The intellectual and personal inclinations of Willits, who headed the division of Social Science for two decades (1939–59) and Herbert A. Deane, whose short stint at the RF was only an early episode of his long academic career, seem to have colored the nature of the program to a certain degree.

The son of a Quaker farmer with a strong concern for social justice, Willits created an innovative program as dean of the Wharton Business School before joining the RF. Deane, on the other hand, was a Brooklyn native whose ties to New York and Columbia spanned nearly four decades from his undergraduate days (the class of 1942) until his retirement in 1984. He had a long teaching career (1948–1963) followed by administrative responsibilities as vice dean and vice provost of the university. He was also the author of *The Political and Social Ideas of Saint Augustine* (1963) and *Political Ideas of Harold J. Laski* (1955), indicative of his academic interest in political philosophy and intellectual history in contrast

37 “The Program in Legal and Political Philosophy,” July 8, 1955, folder 78, box 9, series 910, RG 3, RFA, RAC.

38 Ibid. This review seems to be written by John Stewart who replaced Deane. For a detailed and perceptive account of this program, see Emily Hauptmann, “From Opposition to Accommodation: How Rockefeller Foundation Grants Redefined Relations between Political Theory and Social Science in the 1950s,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 200, No. 4 (November 2006): 643–649.

with Willits' interest in personnel management and labor relations.³⁹

In his October 29, 1934 memorandum for Fosdick, Willits argued that legal research was a neglected field within the program of the social sciences. He pointed out that "the combined appropriations of the [Laura Spelman Rockefeller] Memorial and the [Rockefeller] Foundation for legal research during a seven-year period (from 1925 to 31) amounted to a little less than \$400, 000." Moreover, "since 1931 the Foundation has no grant in this field," having declined a series of requests from the Yale Law School for research in international relations and international law and the Johns Hopkins University toward the general budget of the university's Institute of Law. The RF also declined applications from the New York Law Society and the American Law Institute. It was reported that Dean Clark of the Yale Law School desperately wrote in September 1934 that "the beginnings which had been made in legal research at New Haven must shortly cease if some source of support was not discovered." Being aware of the RF's failure to meet "increased interest and activity in the field of legal research" in the mid 1930s, Willits seemed to be torn between two inclinations: the RF's past commitment to such major institutions as Yale, Johns Hopkins, Harvard, and American Law Institute, and its new opportunities for "combining a program of legal research with those interests which are now central in the program of social sciences." He also hoped that "legal research at the present time might lead to practical and far-reaching reforms."⁴⁰

39 On Willits, see Darwin H. Stapleton, "John Willits and the Rockefeller's European Programme in the Social Sciences," *Minerva*, Volume 41, Number 2 (June 2003): 101–114. I also consulted the *Wharton Alumni magazine*: "125 influential people and ideas: Joseph H. Willits." On Deane's brief biography see Hauptmann's article mentioned in footnote 45 and "Herbert Deane, 69, Ex-Columbia Official, *The New York Times*, February 16, 1991.

40 "Foundation Policy Relating to Legal Research: a memo prepared for Mr. Fosdick —

Presumably the onset of the Second World War made it difficult for Willits to pursue his budding interest in the field of legal research, and it was not until the spring of 1949 that Willits sent out a series of letters to the nation's legal experts, philosophers and political scientists, inquiring about "the desirability of modest efforts by the Foundation to strengthen work in the philosophy and sociology of law, and especially in connection with the relation between law and evolving ethical codes."⁴¹ Willits explained that the social science division's renewed interest in legal research was triggered by "the recommendations on morals and ethics by the Trustee Review Committee and, more specifically, by Mr. Winthrop Aldrich."⁴² Aldrich's "vague comments" about morals and ethics made Willits go "off on one of his [own] vague gropings,"⁴³ as he rather self-deprecatingly told his colleague, Norman S. Buchanan. More importantly, Willits shows some resistance toward "the heavy emphasis of our law schools upon the case pattern" in neglect of "legal studies that would give us a more adequate philosophy or sociology of law and therefore a better basis upon which to examine moral and ethical issues."

Reluctant to "get into the pocket of the professional law school point of view,"⁴⁴ Willits nonetheless tenaciously explored new possibilities in the field of legal studies. He finally found a kindred spirit in Willard Hurst of the University of Wisconsin Law School. According to Bryant G. Garth, Hurst's enemies were "typically Harvard, the established names, legal philosophy and legal traditionalism," while "his allies were typically social science, detailed micro-study, and the

\Appraisal committee," October 29, 1934, folder 71, box 8, series 910, RG3, RFA, RAC.

41 Willits to William E. Hocking, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, Harvard, May 6, 1949, folder 72, box 8, series 910, RG3, RFA, RAC.

42 Willits to Barnard, June 17, 1949, folder 72, box 8, series 910, RG3, RFA, RAC.

43 Willits to Buchanan, October 13, 1950, folder 72, box 8, series 910, RG3, RFA, RAC.

44 Willits to Buchanan, October 13, 1950, folder 72, box 8, series 910, RG3, RFA, RAC.

Midwest.”⁴⁵

Hurst may have shared Willits’ seeming dislike of upper-class Eastern institutions such as Harvard and Yale as well as his enthusiasm for investing in a new generation of scholars. Hurst and his younger Wisconsin colleague, Samuel Mermin, gave Willits two important bits of advice which seem to have led the LAPP program away from a pre-war road of supporting established large institutions into a more individualistic approach.

First, Hurst emphasized “the desirability of stressing investment not in men with established reputation, but in promising men, not yet too definitely committed to positions or affiliations.” He further observed that “a nucleus of trained and motivated men” could not be developed “without some planned effort,” which Mermin described as “intelligent engineering.” “The inevitable costliness of broadening men’s intellectual equipment” should be accepted, Hurst exhorts, describing this as “a seed-corn sort of investment.” Along with the need for a bold investment in young and unknown talents, the second point emphasized by Hurst was the need for a rather broad-based general policy advisory committee whose members should be “selected for the individual contributions of the individuals on it, and in no sense selected to represent schools of thought or particular institutions.” He was also specific about the interdisciplinary nature of the committee, suggesting that it consist of “four lawyers, and two men apiece from political theory, philosophy, sociology and anthropology, and social psychology.”⁴⁶

Hurst’s vision apparently impressed Willits, who, in turn, reformulated it in his own words in a letter to Chester I. Barnard, president of the RF from 1948 to

45 Bryant G. Garth, “James Willard Hurst as Entrepreneur for the Field of Law and Social Science,” *Law and History Review*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Spring 2000): 1.

46 Hurst to Willits, May 9, 1951, with his memorandum and Mermin’s memorandum enclosed, folder 72, box 8, series 910, RG3, RFA, RAC.

1952. Willits emphasized that the LAPP program will provide “a great opportunity for RF to seek out and assist the growth of men with the general competence in political philosophy.” Willits made use of a “rare bird” metaphor in place of Hurst’s Midwestern “seed corn” metaphor when he wrote: “The good political philosopher or theorist is now a very rare bird. The species will take a long time to restore itself; there must be a long period of patient nurture. But we shall neglect the nurture to our peril.”⁴⁷

On May 22, 1952, Willits presented a proposal for the development of a program in legal and political philosophy and the LAPP program was officially approved. The first conference on legal and political philosophy was scheduled to be held at Arden House in Harriman, New York from October 31 to November 2, 1952.

After Herbert A. Deane of Columbia University was appointed assistant director in charge of legal and political philosophy in September, 1952, he seems to have steered the program further away from Aldrich’s traditional and WASPish concern with morals and ethics, and even from Willits’ concern for educational nurturing, democracy and social justice. Deane, with his acquaintanceship with refugee scholars at Columbia and in New York in general, seemed to be more cosmopolitan and moved the direction of the LAPP program toward a “tremendous expansion of the experimental work” envisioned by Samuel Mermin.⁴⁸ After his pre-conference interview with Louis Hartz, Deane noted that Hartz was of the opinion that “group projects of any sort are not likely to be very productive in this field.”⁴⁹

47 Willits to Barnard, February 15, 1952, folder 73, box 8, series 900, RG3, RFA, RAC.

48 Mermin’s memorandum attached to Hurst’s letter of May 9, 1951 to Willits, folder 72, box 8, series 910, RG3, RFA, RAC.

49 Deane interview notes with Louis Hartz, October 17, 1952, folder 74, box 8, series 910, RG3, RFA, RAC.

During the conference “testimony of such men as Franz Neumann and Louis Hartz” brought out “the fact that the most promising students in this area find it next to impossible to get the aid in the way of research scholarships and fellowships.”⁵⁰

In the LAPP program’s early stage, Franz Neumann seems to have played an important role in championing the cause of a younger generation and providing a European perspective. He also became the first recipient of a grant under this program.⁵¹ Neumann was a professor of political science at Columbia famous for his 1942 study of German totalitarianism, *Behemoth*. He was an émigré from Germany who worked as a labor lawyer before taking refuge in England and then in the U.S. He was one of the Frankfurt school scholars whose Institute of Social Research moved to Columbia University in 1934. Max Horkheimer and others went back to Germany in 1950 while Neumann, Marcuse, and Kierchheimer remained in the U.S. Deane seems to have found émigré scholars like Neumann valuable, as he specifically reported the favorable comments of Herbert L. A. Hart

50 R. M. MacIver to Willits, November 7, 1952, folder 75, box 8, series 910, RG3, RFA, RAC.

51 John B. Stewart to Buchanan, “The Program in Legal and Political Philosophy, III. Grants, Fellowships, and Appropriations Awarded,” July 8, 1955, folder 78, box 9, series 910, RG3, RFA, RAC. This list reports that in this initial stage of the program (1952–53), support went to: 1. Franz L. Neumann (Columbia, to study the social bases of dictatorships, \$6,750.00), 2. Peter Laslett (Cambridge, to study U.S. materials on Locke, \$900.00), 3. Shirley Letwin (Chicago, to study the trend of British political philosophy since the development of utilitarianism, \$5,000.00), 4. Social Science Research Council (to provide fellowships in legal and political philosophy-July 1, 1954, to June 30, 1957, \$86,250.00) 5. Lon L. Fuller (Harvard, with David Cavers, to support a study of the ethical problems of legal representation, \$28,400.00 and 6. J. Willard Hurst (Wisconsin, to support a study of the influence of local factors (lumbering, etc.) on legal institutions, \$76,000.00). These grants totaled \$203,300.00.

of Oxford University concerning Neumann and W. Friedman of Toronto University:

Friedman and Neumann were quite different from their American colleagues. Their statements tended to be more general and positive and sometimes were dogmatic and needed further discussion and modification. But both had the virtue of clarity and of a deep concern for ideas and their importance. From many of the Americans, on the other hand, one got the impression that ideas and reflections upon them are not really serious or respectable pursuits.⁵²

Apparently this quality of taking ideas seriously was something which was very appealing to Deane and he seems to have found such a quality crystallized in an émigré scholar like Neumann. In an essay included in *The Cultural Migration*, Neumann tells us that “the U.S. appeared as the sole country where, perhaps, an attempt would be successful to carry out the threefold transition: as a human being, as an intellectual, and a political scholar.”⁵³ Although Neumann’s early death in 1954 thwarted such high expectations, his former student, Kenneth Neal Waltz, in his preface to *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis*, says that Neumann’s “brilliance and excellence as a teacher can never be forgotten by those who knew him.”⁵⁴ Perhaps the young Deane — a Ph.D. candidate at Columbia University at the time of his service⁵⁵ — shared the émigré scholar’s love of ideas.

52 Deane interview notes with Herbert L. A. Hart, November 3, 1952, folder 73, box 8, series 910, RG3, RFA, RAC.

53 Franz L. Neumann, “The Social Sciences,” in *The Cultural Migration: The European Scholar in America*, ed. W. Rex Crawford (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1953), 18.

54 Kenneth Neal Waltz, preface to *Man and the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).

55 Hauptmann, “From Opposition to Accommodation,” 645 (footnote 8).

In a memorandum after the conference, Deane reported that “it is fair to say that with a few exceptions — largely the men with a non-American background — the members of the group gave a negative answer” to Walter Stewart’s simple question at the first session: “Do we really believe in the importance of general ideas?” Deane’s tone is almost that of the American jeremiad, deploring “this lack of philosophic temper and intellectual power in our society,” “increasing intellectual and social specialization and technical complexity,” and “this failure of general analysis and understanding.”⁵⁶ What he is up against is not necessarily the “ever-increasing power of social scientific approaches to the study of politics,”⁵⁷ as Emily Hauptmann suggests. It seems to me that Deane was deploring something that Richard Hofstadter later termed “anti-intellectualism” in American life. In his second memorandum, he sums up what he expects from the RF and its program:

In a period when tremendous sums of money are being poured into scientific research in the field of human behavior by many organizations, my only plea is that RF have the imagination and the courage to devote a small fraction of the funds available to DSS to the area of social philosophy, so that the quality of men may be improved, significant work supported, and the prestige of these studies increased. Particularly in American society, where the natural bent is toward that which is practical, concrete, and immediate, there is a great need for RF action to encourage the development of that which is theoretical, general, and long-run.⁵⁸

56 Deane to Willits, “Suggestions Emerging from the First Conference on Legal and Political Philosophy,” January 12, 1953, folder 76, box 8, series 910, RG3, RFA, RAC. Walter Stewart, an economist, served as chairman of the board of trustees of the RF from 1939 to 1950.

57 Hauptmann, “From Opposition to Accommodation,” 645.

58 Deane to Willits, “Further Comments on Legal and Political Philosophy,” February 6, 1953, folder 76, box 8, series 910, RG3, RFA, RAC.

Although Deane's propensity was toward the "theoretical, general and long-run," he also qualified his statement by suggesting that he had no intention to propose that the "RF should abandon or curtail its efforts to promote the development of scientific studies of human behavior and social relations."

Instead he emphasized that "the dichotomy — science vs. philosophy — is, in my opinion, sterile, vicious, and outmoded."⁵⁹ Here Deane echoed Neumann's plea to Willits: "Then it would be my great wish, if in the elaboration of the program, this very dangerous dichotomy between theory and empiricism could be avoided."⁶⁰ When he asserted that "the verification of a political theory in political reality is still, in my view, the most vital concern of political theory," Neumann was mindful of what happened in Germany as he earlier reflected on how "political ideas assume power only in a completely distorted form."⁶¹ Elsewhere Neumann wrote that "the role of the social scientist is the reconciliation of theory and practice, and that such reconciliation demands concern with and analysis of the brutal facts of life. This deepened understanding of the role of social and political scientists, this the United States has given me."⁶²

Maybe as a warning to American intellectuals becoming too critical of their own intellectual heritage, from which he felt that he learned a lot, Neumann told Deane, "you probably underestimate the amount of work done in political theory in the United States in contrast to all other countries." He reminded him that "research projects in political theory appear in many disguises," in "the classics, languages, history, and political science."⁶³ Establishing a narrow discipline of

59 Ibid.

60 Neumann to Willits, November 10, 1952, folder 75, box 8, RG 910, RFA, RAC.

61 Neumann to Willits, November 2, 1952, folder 75, box 8, series 910, RG 3, RFA, RAC.

62 Neumann, "The Social Sciences," Crawford, ed., *The Cultural Migration*, 24–25.

63 Neumann to Deane, December 1, 1952, folder 75, box 8, series 910, RG3, RFA, RAC.

political philosophy or legal philosophy in universities was something Neumann wanted to avoid, and Deane probably shared this view. Apparently Deane felt that émigré scholars who had witnessed the powerlessness of pure speculation in a crisis situation were better equipped to join the art of unifying analytical skills with a firm grasp of what is happening.

Perhaps this is why Deane, in his memorandum to Willits, recommended Hannah Arendt as one of “men and women outside of academic life who have demonstrated a concern for general ideas and who, if given some free time, might make important contributions to basic thinking about legal and political problems.”⁶⁴ He later described Arendt as “the most perceptive and gifted writer on political philosophy.” In what would become his last extensive memorandum, he also recommended Leo Strauss at Chicago, Franz Neumann at Columbia, and Herbert Marcuse as “probably the most distinguished among the mature men now actively engaged in political philosophy.”⁶⁵

In addition to Arendt (a 1956 LAPP grantee, studying the relationships in political theory among politics, society and work)⁶⁶ and Marcuse (1959, studying cultural changes in contemporary industrial society)⁶⁷, such refugee scholars as Otto Kirchheimer (1956, studying political justice)⁶⁸ and Hans Jonas (1959, study-

64 Deane to Willits, Conference on Legal and Political Philosophy, November 18, 1952, folder 75, box 8, series 910, RG3, RFA, RAC.

65 Deane to Willits, “Program and Staff in Legal and Political Philosophy,” September 3, 1953, folder 77, box 8, series 910, RG3, RFA, RAC.

66 See folder 4880, box 570, series 200s, RG1.2, Series 200s, Box 570, Folder 4880), RG1.2, RFA, RAC.

67 See folder 4113, box 481, series 200s, RG1.2, RFA, RAC.

68 See folder 4614, box 539, series 200s, RG1.2. RFA, RAC. His fellow émigré scholars such as Erich Hula, Herbert Marcuse, Karl Loewenstein, John Herz wrote reference letters for him.

ing Gnosticism and its relation to the history of political thought)⁶⁹ were awarded fellowships under the LAPP. Another refugee scholar who had close ties with this program was Hans J. Morgenthau, director of the Center for the Study of American Foreign Policy at Chicago. Morgenthau practiced law in Frankfurt between 1927 and 1932 before coming to the U.S. and taught at the University of Kansas while studying American law in order to be admitted to the bar in the U.S. A good friend of Kenneth Thompson, who succeeded Willits as director of the RF's Social Science Division, Morgenthau became a liaison between legal studies and international relations. In his December 28, 1953 memorandum to Willits, Thompson wrote:

The serious critics of the current interpretations given to the place of the national interest in foreign policy include scholars like Reinhold Niebuhr, Arnold Wolfers, Sterling professor of International Relations at Yale, and Dorothy Fosdick. If three such scholars could meet with Morgenthau and/or Kennan, much soul-searching would result providing discussions went on over a period of time so definition of concepts and time for reflection was made possible.⁷⁰

Thompson asked Morgenthau to serve as a member of the RF's Advisory Committee in LAPP from 1957–1959, and he also served as a member of its Advisory Committee in International Relations in 1961.

In the field of international relations and international law, refugee scholars were prominent, and Thompson seems to have built up an informal circle of both refugee scholars and American intellectuals by using RF-assisted conferences and

69 See folder 4613, box 539, series 200s, RG1.2. RFA, RAC.

70 Thompson to Willits, December 28, 1953, folder 60, box 7, series 910, RG 3, RFA, RAC.

seminars as a kind of clearing house for this diverse and interdisciplinary group. In 1960, with Thompson's initiative, a new project on international relations was implemented following the pattern established by the LAPP. This program, emphasizing interdisciplinary approaches and making use of the refugee scholars' idea of synthesizing theory and practice, seems to have contributed to the hybridization of ideas within its limited scope.

Conclusion

Hugh Wilford, discussing the RF's support of the *Partisan Review* in his book *The New York Intellectuals: From Vanguard to Institution*, poses a difficult question: "Are thoughts organically formed? Is it possible to control or manipulate thoughts externally to make them fit into the goals of organizations such as foundations?"⁷¹ The archival material I examined with a special focus on refugee scholars and American intellectuals in the 1950s does not yield a ready answer to this question.

The RF's ideological position on the whole might be placed within the general range of Cold War liberal consensus. Its support of CCF cannot be wholly understood without considering the cultural politics of the Cold War. On the other hand, the origins and motives which supported a project like the LAPP are more complex, as it reflected different and often contradicting views and motives of the RF's successive presidents, trustees, officers, academic consultants and grantees. One of the ironies of the situation in the LAPP program is that quite a few refugee scholars who were fiercely independent and anti-establishment, and un-orthodox in their thinking were recruited into a program whose original concern with

71 Hugh Wilford, *The New York Intellectuals: From Vanguard to Institution* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 117.

morality and ethics was WASPish and imbued with evangelical reformism.

Is it possible to argue that the kind of mutants produced through the cross-fertilization that Willits envisioned were not only interdisciplinary variants but also ideological ones? Did the RF want to see the U.S. Anglo-Saxon legal, political and social heritage which was challenged by different ideological sources during and after the Second World War strengthened by European intellectual heritages with their stronger theoretical footings? And indeed, was the kind of Cold War consensus formed in the 1950s a product of such cross-fertilization? Or if thoughts are organically evolved and could not be engineered by governmental organizations or private foundations, the intellectual consequences of grant-giving activities would be unpredictable, and any pattern we might try to see in grantees' intellectual output would be purely accidental and fortuitous. Again there is no ready answer.

It is possible to speculate that refugee scholars' émigré experience of surviving in a relatively uncertain situation made them particularly responsive to the fluidity of the international situation and motivated them to pursue a new path in their academic inquiry. Just as they crossed national, linguistic, and cultural borders in their personal lives, they crossed disciplinary borders and sometimes ideological borders easily. To borrow a term used by material science experts, they might have been equipped with some quality akin to "transformation-induced plasticity."

Furthermore, the kind of émigré network that developed among the refugee scholars and their connection with the establishment through their wartime involvement in governmental agencies and private foundations might have made them a more cohesive group than has been previously assumed. In some sense during the Cold War many refugee scholars came to their academic maturity and transformed themselves from "refugee scholars" into American scholars or rather

cosmopolitan scholars who were engaged in academic pursuits across and beyond the national borders. Lone wolves became more institutionalized and the Rockefeller Foundation, wittingly or unwittingly, seems to have played a part in this process.